/1444 cont./

b. General Knowledge

•86 The endowment that each child brings into this world as his heritage from his parents and as his natural equipment shows many different gradations even here in Tierra del Fuego. The aptitude of the individual is developed in actual education, at first in the parental hut, later in the čiéxaus. Adults regard their own /1445/ efforts to train growing youngsters as a serious duty which they perform daily, so to speak. Tirelessly they teach their children, they show them this and that operation, explain one thing and another to them, demonstrate this and that, ask their own questions and

[251]

Fig. 99. Piece of Gut Filled with Blubber. Two-thirds natural size.

answer those of youthful questioners, observe the latter's progress and warn them of a wrong course. Although this instruction is primarily designed to help the younger generation obtain great proficiency in the use of weapons and implements, nevertheless in their daily contact the adults also give general information and occasionally special knowledge about definite usage and customs, about religion and mythology in the broadest sense of the term. Step by step and gradually, as circumstances advise and the mental maturity of the young person demands it, he learns more and more about the rich and manifold fund of knowledge of his tribe. There can be no question of orderly lessons; explanations and comments are given on occasions offered in everyday life, the boys being taught primarily by the male, girls by the female adult tribal members, chiefly by relatives within the family group.

/1445 cont./

86 153 Without noticeable coercion, the young people improve themselves, one more than another, according to their natural gifts and personal diligence. Someone who is particularly alert and mentally active makes more rapid progress; the adults are more willing to take trouble with him and they teach him many things earlier than they do his contemporaries. The fact that among the Yamana, also, some persons have a good deal more knowledge than the average can be traced back to inclination, industry, and a desire to learn. Some are extraordinarily limited and know only what is most necessary. A person who commands [555] superior knowledge attracts those around him, influences them, and is highly regarded far and wide. The superior position of most yékamuš rests on the fact that they surpass their countrymen in their possession of things of the mind.

86 If one should gather together all the knowledge gained by experience and the numerous individual facts that every Yamana possesses, he would build up an astonishing fund of information. Borrowing from this source, every generation enriches itself anew and finds it adequate to meet the demands of existence, to satisfy the needs of the mind, to attain the economic goals, and to lead an ordered, harmonious tribal life beneficial to each individual. Relying on his knowledge and his powers, the Fuegian, as master of the animal kingdom and the strong forces of nature in his unfriendly country, strives toward his goals and is confident of victory.

/1446/ 1. Measuring and Counting

435 The Yamana lack a universal standard of value, such as money or the various kinds of measures. They must resort to estimating actual value in one way or another. This is done according to certain considerations, not the least of which, and often decisive, are the beauty and perfection of the object. The scarcer a thing is, the higher its value. These and other considerations are naturally decisive in barter. They also determine whether the recipient of a gift rates it higher or lower. On page 873 there are examples showing a kind of scale of value. It is obvious that our Yamana are unable to evaluate the things given to them by